

## **Administrative Rule 9.09.05**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>  <b>VISIBLE ALARM NOTIFICATION DEVICES</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>  June 9, 2005
<b>REFERENCES:</b>  SFC 907.10.1 SBC 1102.1	<b>SUPERSEDES:</b>
	<b>FCAB REVIEW DATE:</b> April 19, 2005
<b>NOTICE:</b> NOTICE: Administrative Rules are established per 2003 Seattle Fire Code Section 104.1, and they are subject to the Administrative Sections 104.9 Alternate Materials and Methods, Section 104.8 Modifications, and Section 108.1 Appeals.	<b>APPROVED:</b>  JOHN H. NELSEN, FIRE MARSHAL

### **SCOPE:**

This Administrative Rule clarifies the requirements for installation of visible alarm notification devices for new fire alarm systems and for alteration, replacement or upgrades of existing fire alarm systems in existing buildings.

### **WHEN REQUIRED:**

Visible alarm devices installed in accordance with this rule shall be provided for:

- New fire alarm systems.
- Replacement fire alarm systems.
- Existing fire alarm systems with visual alarm devices located in the space being altered.
- Existing fire alarm systems, without visible alarm devices, which are undergoing a major modification.
- Existing buildings undergoing a substantial alteration as determined by the City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development

**Exception:** Each non-residential space which has not started interior build-out is allowed to be provided with a single visible alarm notification device until the initial build-out of the space occurs, at which time full coverage in accordance with this rule is required.

### **Major modification of a fire alarm system**

For purposes of this rule a fire alarm system is considered to be undergoing a major modification when a fire alarm project includes replacing a majority of a fire alarm system's notification circuits and/or appliances, as determined by the Fire Code Official.

**Alteration of a space with visible alarm devices located in the space being altered.**

Alteration of a space that contains existing visible alarm notification devices requires adding and/or relocating visible alarm notification devices to provide complete coverage within the altered space. This requirement also applies to vacant non-residential spaces where the initial alarm installation included incomplete visible alarm device coverage.

**Alteration of a space with no visible alarm devices in the space being altered.**

Alteration of a space with an existing fire alarm system, with no visible alarm notification devices, requires installation of the devices only when the alteration includes a major modification of the fire alarm system.

**Fire alarm projects not involving alteration of a space**

Fire alarm projects not associated with an alteration of a space do not require installation of visible alarm devices unless the work is considered to be a major modification of a fire alarm system. Major modifications of fire alarm systems trigger a requirement to install visible alarm devices throughout the building in those areas where visible alarm devices are required.

**Fire alarm panel replacement**

Replacement of a fire alarm panel, and/or smoke detectors is a maintenance function. It does not constitute a system upgrade, system replacement, or new system; therefore, it does not trigger a requirement to install visible alarm notification devices. Maintenance to fire alarm systems involving anything other than panel replacement and/or smoke detectors requires the installation of visible alarm notification devices throughout a building when the work constitutes a major modification of a fire alarm system.

**LOCATION OF VISIBLE ALARM NOTIFICATION DEVICES**

The 2003 Seattle Fire Code (section 970.10.1.1) requires the installation of visible alarm notification devices in public and common areas. Applicable definitions from the 2003 Seattle Building Code, Section 1102, are as follows:

**Public-Use Areas:** Interior or exterior rooms or spaces that are made available to the general public.

**Common Use:** Interior or exterior circulation paths, rooms, spaces or elements that are not available for public use and are made available for the shared use of two or more people.

**Employee Work Area:** All or any portion of a space used only by employees and only for work. Corridors, toilet rooms, kitchenettes and break rooms are not employee work areas.

When visible alarm notification devices are required, they shall be installed throughout public and common areas other than exit enclosures. In accordance with the above definitions, the only spaces allowed to be without visible alarm notification devices are single person offices. Even though open plan office arrangements are comprised largely of single person office spaces there is typically a significant amount of shared circulation paths within these areas that do require visible alarm notification devices.

**Additional Requirements for Group I and R Occupancies**

The 2003 Seattle Fire Code (section 907.10.1.3) requires a certain number of sleeping units or dwelling units in group I-1 and R-1 occupancies to be provided with visible alarm notification devices that are activated by both the building fire alarm system and the in-room smoke alarms. Group I-1 occupancies include alcohol and drug centers, assisted living centers, congregate care facilities, convalescent facilities, group homes, half-way houses, residential board and care

facilities, and social rehabilitation centers. Group R-1 occupancies include hotels, motels, and short term boarding houses. For those units required to be provided with visible alarm notification devices the devices shall be installed throughout the unit except in closets that are not walk-in closets.

For R-2 occupancies (apartment buildings, condominiums etc) the 2003 Seattle Fire Code (section 907.10.1.4) requires every unit to be provided with capability to support visible alarm notification appliances. The wiring for the in-unit horns shall be considered to meet the requirements of section 907.10.1.4.

For R-2 occupancies in buildings with emergency voice alarm systems a separate visible alarm circuit is required for each dwelling unit and allowed to be terminated at the location of the emergency voice alarm speaker.